

22 April, 2022

Myanmar CSOs meet with UN Special Envoy, express concern on her upcoming trip to Myanmar *Discuss an inclusive approach to Humanitarian Consultation with ASEAN*

On 15 April, representatives of Myanmar civil society organizations (CSOs) met with the UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar (UNSE), Noeleen Heyzer.

The Special Envoy shared updates on her activities, with reference to key [recommendations](#) made by civil society groups during their first meeting on 21 February. Following internal consultations, nine civil society representatives joined the meeting, updated the Special Envoy, and expressed frustrations regarding the lack of concrete action from the international community to halt the military's violence.

During the meeting, the representatives raised several concerns regarding the human rights and humanitarian crises in Myanmar, the worst the situation has been in decades. The issues of accountability, airstrikes and armed attacks on civilians by the brutal junta, provision of humanitarian aid, and the imposition of an arms embargo and targeted sanctions were covered. The UNSE's proposed engagement on the issue of Women Peace and Security (WPS) and humanitarian aid were further discussed. In particular, the representatives raised the concern that the issue of WPS and humanitarian aid would be instrumentalized by the illegal junta for its own political gain.

The Myanmar CSO representatives expressed concerns regarding the UNSE's upcoming trip to Myanmar and urged Her Excellency to ensure that the trip will not be manipulated and leveraged by the Myanmar junta to gain political legitimacy. The representatives cautioned the UNSE of the real dangers of the junta showcasing the visit to demonstrate their recognition and acceptance by the UN and the international community, further emboldening them to continue their terror campaign, committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

According to a [press briefing](#) by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the UN who was responding to a question regarding a possible meeting on Myanmar at the UN Security Council this month, the **UNSE on Myanmar is slated for a visit to Myanmar in later April.**

No dates have been publicly confirmed and no official announcement has been made by the Special Envoy's office.

The United Kingdom, as the president of the UN Security Council for the month of April, has [stated](#) that a meeting on the situation in Myanmar is scheduled at the "end of the month" where it hopes to hear from the ASEAN Special Envoy and the UNSE. CSOs have been [calling](#) for an open briefing by the UN Security Council, as well as for Myanmar civil society to brief the Council. Representatives called on the Special Envoy to support and amplify their call for the open briefing by the UN Security Council.

Representatives also reiterated concerns expressed in the previous meeting on how the UN Special Envoy's mandate has been historically ineffectual and once again urged the mandate to be transformed and updated to focus on accountability and Transitional Justice, to reflect the current ground realities, and that is focused on the needs of the people of Myanmar.

In response to the [proposed Consultative Meeting](#) by the ASEAN Special Envoy to address the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, the representatives posed questions to the UNSE on what steps were being taken to ensure an inclusive consultative meeting, in line with ASEAN's Five Point Consensus which

calls for “constructive dialogue among all parties concerned”, particularly the participation of the National Unity Government, Ethnic Revolutionary Organizations and local civil society. The representatives questioned how this inclusiveness would be ensured and what steps will be taken by the UNSE if such consultation fails to be inclusive.

Representatives also added that to resolve the humanitarian crisis, the international community must be unequivocal about the military’s role in creating the crisis, its ongoing blockage of humanitarian aid and attacks on humanitarian actors, and the need for the international community to halt the military’s violence. It is noted that blocking humanitarian aid and attacking humanitarian actors are war crimes.

On the **UN-ASEAN WPS** platform, which the UN Special Envoy is co-chairing with the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, the representatives stressed that while such dedicated space for women and girls is critically important given the widespread and systematic use of rape and sexual violence in conflict by the Myanmar military, it is of grave concern that the space could be instrumentalized by the junta to gain political legitimacy. The representatives stressed the need to prevent such hijacking of the WPS agenda and called on the UNSE to immediately hold consultations with women human rights defenders and women’s rights organizations from Myanmar. The UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security confirm the fundamental right of affected women to be included and heard at such platforms.

The groups also expressed their concern that while the international community’s attention and action has concentrated on crimes committed by the Russian regime against the people of Ukraine, discussions on and **efforts to address accountability** for crimes committed by the military in Myanmar have stalled and questioned what mechanisms can be proposed to hold the Myanmar military accountable for their grave crimes.

Representatives also highlighted the **intensification of airstrikes** against civilians, not only in Karen and Karenni States but across central Myanmar in Sagaing and Magway Regions as well as in western part of Myanmar in Chin State. The daily and nightly attacks by the military have targeted villages and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. In Karenni State alone, the airstrikes, coupled with indiscriminate shelling by the junta’s troops, has killed 250 people since the attempted coup. The representatives proposed these urgent issues and reiterated calls made by the Myanmar people to impose a no-fly zone, sanction aviation fuel, and establish safe zones for IDPs to be discussed at the Consultative Meeting on humanitarian crisis.

In relation to the ongoing violence across Myanmar, the representatives also raised the issue of the **lack of implementation of recommendations made by the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission**. These include for the UN Security Council to impose targeted financial sanctions against the military, military-owned companies and their subsidiaries, and to impose a comprehensive arms embargo in response to the genocide committed against Rohingya and crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in Kachin and Shan States. Similar patterns of grave crimes have only intensified and have become nationwide since the 1 February 2021 failed coup. Highlighting that continuing flow of arms to the military and their many sources of revenue, including from international businesses such as oil and gas, allows the military to continue to carry out its war crimes and crimes against humanity, the representatives urged a strong global action, beyond non-binding statements, to implement the Fact-Finding Mission’s recommendations.

In relation to **humanitarian aid provision**, the representatives urged the UNSE to push for the provision of aid to reach to people in need, particularly through cross-border channels by local humanitarian and CSOs. The representatives stressed that for decades local organizations along the border of Myanmar have played

a key role in provision of humanitarian aid and that such locally designed modes of humanitarian aid provision must be supported and scaled up, and a safe environment ensured to carry out their work.

In addition, the representatives once again urged the UN Special Envoy to develop modalities for robust engagement with Myanmar civil society and to this end, the groups called for a follow-up meeting to discuss this matter. Finally, representatives expressed their commitment to continue to engage with the Special Envoy in the pursuit of civilian protection, justice and accountability, and democracy.

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